

## TRANSLATION AND COMMUNITY

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**Translation and community**, Mustapha Taibi, New York: Routledge, 2024, 214 pp., £35.99, ISBN: 978-1-032-42426-2 (Paperback).<sup>1</sup>

Community translation plays a crucial role in bridging communication gaps between public services and multilingual communities, ensuring language accessibility for marginalized groups. In this context, Mustapha Taibi's book provides a structured and comprehensive introduction to the subject, exploring fundamental questions about community translation, from the translator's role to the challenges of ensuring language accessibility. As well as offering guidelines to novice community translators, the book traces the evolution of community translation as both a professional practice and a social service, emphasizing its role in public communication. It also provides further readings, reflective questions, and case studies to enhance understanding for students and practitioners.

Chapter 1, 'What is special about community translation?', examines the distinct characteristics of community translation as a professional activity and social service. The chapter highlights the social role of community translators in ensuring equitable access to translation services to all groups in society. The concept of translation agency is a key focus, highlighting how translators play an active role in enhancing the effectiveness of public communication (pp. 10–11). Taibi reviews the terminology and key issues in community translation, including quality assurance, language accessibility, and methods of information dissemination. The chapter also discusses factors that influence the quality of community translation, such as translator involvement, social policies, and collaboration with stakeholders. Taibi offers insights into community translation and language policy, emphasizing the need to address ethical dilemmas and practical challenges to enhance accessibility and inclusivity in multilingual societies.

Chapter 2, 'Your role as a community translator', examines the multifaceted role of community translators, highlighting their responsibilities as cultural mediators, social agents and facilitators of communication (pp. 28–33). This chapter underscores the need to balance accuracy, impartiality and a deep understanding of the social and cultural

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context of the audience. Taibi effectively bridges theory and practice by incorporating ethical codes and real-world case studies.

Chapter 3, 'Text types, translation brief and translation strategies', presents the functional approach to translation, emphasizing the Skopos theory (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014) alongside the concepts of text type, translation brief, and translation strategy (p. 43). The chapter underscores the importance of aligning community translation with the communication goals and needs of the target audience rather than merely pursuing linguistic equivalence. Consequently, it calls for a more in-depth analysis of the practical challenges in applying functional theory, particularly within institutional settings that continue to prioritize literal translation.

Chapter 4, 'Translating public messaging', discusses the translation of public messages as part of a communication strategy, particularly in social and health awareness campaigns (pp. 62–64). This chapter outlines how community translators need to balance message accuracy and language accessibility for diverse audiences. By highlighting the concepts of audience design and user personas, this chapter strengthens its functional approach, making it highly applicable to the context of community translation.

Chapter 5, 'Translating regulatory texts', discusses the translation of institutional documents that regulate public rights and services for citizens. Taibi highlights the complexity of translating such texts, as they must strike a balance between terminological accuracy and readability for a wide audience. The concept of "government by translation" is introduced to illustrate how translation becomes a tool for managing public policy in multilingual societies (p. 86). The chapter offers an in-depth analysis of the institutional standards that shape translation practices, including consistency of terminology and levels of language formality. Taibi positions the translator's role at the intersection of institutional authority and audience needs, highlighting the ethical challenges inherent in maintaining both fidelity and accessibility in community translation.

Chapter 6, 'Translating culturally sensitive texts', discusses the challenges of translating texts containing sensitive cultural issues, such as gender issues, domestic violence, and religious references (pp. 108–114). The chapter highlights the role of the translator as a cultural mediator who not only conveys meaning across languages but also adapts the text to ensure cultural relevance to the target audience without sacrificing accuracy. Taibi grounds her analysis in theories of cultural relevance and mediation, and incorporating translation strategies such as cultural substitution and the use of euphemisms.

Chapter 7, 'Translating for different dissemination media', examines translation across various distribution channels, emphasizing differences in translation strategies between written texts, audiovisual content, and digital media. The analysis is supported by relevant research, especially in the context of public health communication such as COVID-19 campaigns (p. 121). The chapter's strength lies in its comprehensive and practical multimodal approach, but the discussion of technical challenges in subtitling and dubbing

would benefit from a deeper analysis, particularly regarding spatial and temporal constraints.

Chapter 8, 'Translating personal official documents', discusses the translation of documents such as birth certificates, driving licenses, and diplomas, within the framework of language services for migrant communities. The chapter outlines the main challenges in translating official documents, including accuracy standards, document integrity, and variations in legal and administrative systems across countries. A functional approach to translation, as proposed by Prieto Ramos, is considered essential for maintaining a balance between fidelity to the source text and the needs of the end user (p. 140).

Chapter 9, 'Locating and using resources', focuses on the critical use of various translation tools, including dictionaries, glossaries, encyclopedias, parallel texts, and emerging technologies such as machine translation and artificial intelligence (pp. 155–169). The chapter emphasizes that effective community translation requires not only access to these resources but also the ability to assess their reliability and contextual applicability. While the content is comprehensive and pedagogically relevant, the discussion remains largely normative, overlooking the practical limitations faced by translators in under-resourced settings. Although the chapter provides an extensive examination of AI tools, its perspective tends to be overly optimistic and lacks a deeper critique of their potential impact on translation ethics and quality (pp. 162–167). Like a puzzle missing key pieces, the chapter would be more complete with sharper, context-sensitive perspectives, particularly on the role and implications of technology tools in various translation settings.

Chapter 10, 'Revising your and another translator's work', discusses translation revision as a critical process in ensuring quality, particularly in the context of community translation (pp. 172–187). The chapter emphasizes that revision—whether self-revision, other-revision, or post-editing—is not merely an error-detection task but a nuanced process involving accuracy, clarity, cultural appropriateness, and user accessibility. It highlights that revision should be adapted to the communicative purpose and context of the translation, especially when serving diverse communities. While the chapter thoroughly outlines key revision parameters—drawing from frameworks such as National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) and The Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators-the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (AUSIT-FECCA)—it tends to generalize the competence of revisers, assuming that skilled translators are naturally effective revisers, a claim challenged by some empirical studies (Gonzalez et al., 2023). Much like an intricate negotiation, revision tasks involve complex interpersonal dynamics, yet a deeper examination of ethical considerations and power imbalances between translators and revisers in institutional settings would provide a more comprehensive perspective.

Chapter 11, 'Teamwork and community engagement', conceptualizes community translation as a socially embedded practice that requires more than linguistic and textual competence; it emphasizes the need for interpersonal, attitudinal, and strategic skills to function effectively within professional teams and sociocultural communities (pp. 188–

201). The chapter challenges the traditional perception of translators as solitary workers by reframing them as collaborative agents who must engage with colleagues, clients, and communities. While the discussion offers a comprehensive overview of teamwork dynamics—including role distribution, conflict resolution, and quality assurance—it occasionally idealizes collaboration, overlooking institutional hierarchies and potential power imbalances in multilingual team settings. Moreover, the chapter promotes community engagement through situated and work-integrated learning, illustrating best practices from service-learning programs in Spain and the U.S. A more critical analysis of issues such as gatekeeping in community access, cultural representation, and volunteer exploitation would strengthen the discussion.

This book serves as a fundamental resource for translators, academics and policymakers seeking to understand the role of community translation in promoting language accessibility and social inclusion. In addition, it provides in-depth insights into community translation, illustrating its complexity across various dimensions. Reading this book is akin to constructing a bridge, where each chapter connects theoretical foundations with practical applications, forming a comprehensive understanding of translation as a social service. Through a structured progression of topics, readers can engage with key themes such as the role of community translators, ethical considerations, and the impact of translation on multilingual societies.

## REFERENCES

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Amami Shofiya Al Qorin is a translation practitioner and researcher who focuses on Arabic language and Literature. As a lecturer at Universitas Jambi and a member of the Indonesian Translators Association (HPI), her contributions are closely related to the field of translation and community, especially in Arabic contexts.

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